III. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Changes to the travel process should be presented in a logical and effective manner, with the fewest disruptions to travelers and the supporting offices providing travel planning, accounting, and financial services. To carry out the Travel Lab recommendations, the following teams will assist in the establishment of policy and procedures required for implementation to occur. These teams will report progress and results to the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget. The following actions are recommended: (1) communicate recommended changes; (2) issue departmental travel policy statements; (3) create the necessary cultural change; (4) complete Travel Management Center initiatives; (5) design and develop an integrated Automated Travel System.

- **Travel Lab Team-** Will provide briefings to departmental officials and organizations (e.g., Chief Financial Officers, Interior Management Council) and bureau heads, as requested, regarding these recommendations. In addition, the Travel Lab will develop necessary policy guidance required to carry out the recommended travel policy and cultural changes. This team will provide continuity and serve as a resource and focal point for subsequent implementation efforts.

- **Travel Management Center Team-** The Department wide team will develop contract requirements for potential issuance of reduced numbers of TMC contracts. This team is already in place and consists of administrative and finance representatives from all bureaus.

- **Automated Travel System Improvement Team**- The Department wide team will identify, assess, and recommend alternative system approaches for a single automated travel system to further reduce the administrative cost of the travel process. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing automated interfaces between the travel system and the accounting system. The Finance Officers Partnership will take the lead role in this effort to ensure the resulting system is fully integrated with the accounting system. The Team will include representatives from Information Resources Management, program and user communities.

- **Bureau Efforts** - To assure that travel process changes are effectively communicated to all employees, bureaus will provide further information on the findings, recommendations, and travel process changes in a uniform and consistent manner. Procedures for the clean up of existing bureau issued travel advance and American Express delinquencies need to be complied with.

A. **Communicate Recommended Travel Process Changes**

The Travel Lab will provide briefings to departmental and bureau level management on the findings and recommendations in this report. The communication of findings, recommendations, and travel process changes to all employees will be handled by the bureaus/offices.

B. **Issue Travel Policy Statements**

All of the waivers which were granted by GSA included requirements to be met prior to implementation which will be included in the Departmental travel policy statements to the bureaus/offices. The Travel Lab will develop a draft Department wide policy statement(s) reflecting the report recommendations. The final policy statement(s) released by the Department is intended to support bureau implementation efforts. This policy statement will lead to a revision of the Departmental Manual by the Office of Financial Management and will address the following items:

1. **Government-sponsored Travel Charge Card Actions**

    a. Expected Use of the Individually Issued Government-sponsored Travel Charge Card for Official Travel

    b. Expected Use of ATM Privileges in Lieu of Bureau Issued Travel Advances

    c. Encouraged Reduction in Centralized Billing Accounts

2. **Travel Policy Changes**

    a. Supervisors Are Designated Owners of the Travel Process and Empowered to Authorize and Approve Travel

    b. A Single Level of Supervisory Review/approval Is Strongly Encouraged

    c. Promote the Electronic Payment of Travel Vouchers

3. **Travel Process Changes Resulting from GSA and GAO Waivers**

    a. Simplify Computation of per Diem (First and Last Days of Travel)

b.   Use of Annual Limited Open Travel Authorizations

- Eliminate requirement for quarterly review and revalidation
- Include conferences, meetings, training, and foreign travel on the limited open authorization
- Exclude statement of trip purpose on the limited open authorization
- Eliminate attaching a limited open travel authorization to each travel voucher
- Eliminate obligation of estimated funds from the limited open travel authorization

c.   Reduce Use of Trip-by-trip Authorizations

d.   Potential Change in the 15 percent Limit on Tips to Taxi Drivers

e.   Potential Change in the Requirement to List All Passengers in Rental Cars, Privately Owned and Government Owned Vehicles

f.   Post Payment Voucher Examination Process When Appropriate

C.   Create the Necessary Cultural Change

Implementation of the Travel Lab recommendations will require substantial cultural changes. In order to facilitate these changes, efforts must be directed toward articulating the respective roles and responsibilities of employees and supervisors/team leaders in the travel process.

1.   **A Code of Ethics** setting forth the duties and responsibilities of all departmental employees relating to the travel process.

2.   **Clean Up Existing Travel Related Problems**

a.   A department wide effort to "clean up" existing bureau issued travel advance and travel charge card delinquencies will be undertaken

b.   Communication by Assistant Secretary-Policy, Management and Budget will support bureaus/offices in the clean up efforts

D.   Complete Travel Management Center Initiatives

The Travel Management Center Team was established, as directed, to define bureau/office service

requirements for future potential Department wide TMC Contract(s). The remaining milestones for this team include:

1.   Issue a Request for Information

2.   Finalize DOI Customer Service Requirements

3.   Issue a Request for Proposal

4.   Evaluate Responses for Travel Management Center Contract(s) and Make Recommendations

E.   Design and Develop an Integrated Automated Travel System

The Travel Lab recommends that an automated travel system improvement team be formed to identify, assess, and recommend alternative system approaches. The actions should include:

1.   Develop User Requirements

2.   Assess Alternative Systems

3.   Develop Interface Specifications with Accounting Systems

4.   Ensure Compatibility with Existing Communication Environments

5.   Develop a Standardized Audit Guide

6.   Implement System